

February 2, 2006

Honorable Ruth V. McGregor
Chief Justice
Arizona Supreme Court
1501 West Washington Street, 4th Floor
Phoenix, AZ 85007-3329

Re: Petition to Amend State Bar Rules on Membership
Categories - Over 70 and Retired

Dear Chief Justice McGregor:

As a retired member of the Arizona State Bar, for the past 12 years, who will turn 70 in 2006, I would like to comment on the Bar proposal to eliminate the age-based dues exemption.

I can understand changing the rule for active members, but not for retired members, who cost the Bar nothing. The current \$215 dues, for retired status, are exorbitant, considering we receive no benefits from our membership. The sole communication I get from the Bar is my annual dues statement, and notification of listing in the Bar Directory. When I first went on retired status, the Bar refused to give me a Bar card, telling me flatly that, as a retired member, I was "entitled" to nothing. My letter to the Bar director, concerning this policy, went unanswered. Fortunately, that policy changed, and I now receive a card.

I am proud to be a member of the State Bar of Arizona, and I retained my membership after my retirement, despite the financial hardship, knowing that once I reached 70, I would not have to pay dues. Not all attorneys are wealthy, particularly when we are no longer working. I manage on a limited fixed income, and even a gradual dues reduction to \$100 is insufficient relief. I fear I shall have to resign from the Bar, which would be a grievous blow for me, if the current proposal is adopted.

I am also an inactive member of the State Bar of California, which has no retired status. My annual dues are \$50 (just raised to \$115, the first change in 20 years), and I receive that Bar's monthly publication. I will automatically be exempt from dues in 2007, as I will have reached 70.

Summing up, I urge a reconsideration of the proposal, as it applies to retired members. And if the status of currently exempt members does not change, at the very least, an exception should also be made for those turning 70 in 2006. Thank you for the opportunity to present these comments.

Very truly yours,

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